

an essential program and completely dismantling it. It just doesn't make sense!

My Republican colleagues are at it once again—trying to limit the role of the Federal Government in public education under the excuse of "accountability" and better State and Federal coordination. If accountability was such a huge concern, then why does the Head Start reauthorization bill remove standards and requirements? And if States are facing such drastic budget shortfalls, then why are we tempting them with the opportunity to reduce services and transfer funds from Head Start to other services? It just doesn't make sense.

The only thing that makes sense is to bring Head Start back to its original, bipartisan state with the same strong, Federal accountability standards and increased funding so all eligible children can benefit from Head Start services. That is a program that makes sense.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VITO FOSSELLA

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am not recorded on rollcall Nos. 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263 and 264. I was unavoidably detained and was not present to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes," on rollcall Nos. 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263 and 264.

RECOGNITION OF ART BROWN OF HECLA MINING CO.

HON. C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House the distinguished accomplishments of Art Brown, chief executive officer of Hecla Mining Company, on the occasion of his retirement.

Art Brown retired last month from Hecla Mining after 36 years of service. Mr. Brown was manager of the Lucky Friday Mine in 1979, when silver prices rose from \$5 to \$50 per ounce, and Hecla became the No. 1 performer on the New York Stock Exchange. Last year, Hecla's stock rose 400 percent, again making it a top NYSE performer. However, it was not an easy task to keep the company afloat during the years between in which it was plagued by low market prices, environmental litigation and cash-flow problems. Under Mr. Brown's leadership, however, the company has moved from close to bankruptcy to a viable, growing enterprise producing record amounts of gold and silver in 2002. Under the visionary leadership of Art Brown, Hecla Mining Co. has survived and flourished. The company is now positioned to move forward into a future of growth and continued profitability.

I congratulate Art Brown on his success, and wish him an enjoyable retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF MEDICARE REFORM ACT

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to introduce the Medicare Reform Act. Along with the original cosponsors of the bill, Representative TOM TANCREDI, Representative MARILYN MUSGRAVE, Representative PETE SESSIONS, Representative WILLIAM JENKINS, and Representative DON MANZULLO, I believe that this proposal can improve Medicare and preserve it for the future.

Our current system is a patchwork program governed by tens of thousands of pages of rigid rules, regulations, guidelines and administrative decisions and the current system is filled with inefficiencies and waste. While Medicare will cover medicine for a patient who receives an injection at a doctor's office, it will not provide the same coverage to a patient who chooses to save Medicare doctors' fees by administering the same injection at home.

Medicare will pay for a kidney transplant—but not for anti-rejection drugs for the new kidney. If you stop taking medication because of the cost, Medicare will pay for a second kidney transplant.

Medicare covers the costs of home visits by occupational therapists and physical therapists but not respiratory therapists. The patient must come to the hospital or doctor's office—more expensive options.

In 2002, improper payments in the Medicare program were estimated at \$13.3 billion. Of that amount, \$7 billion was for services the government later deemed medically unnecessary.

I have authored the Medicare Reform Act of 2003, legislation that would reshape Medicare to closely resemble the health care system for federal employees. The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program provides high-quality health benefits to 8.6 million federal employees and retirees, including Members of Congress, in all 50 states. It is a typical employee health plan, except employees have a choice—they receive a guidebook describing their coverage options and choose the option that best meets their needs.

I want to give Medicare beneficiaries the same options.

By providing senior citizens and disabled individuals with the same health care benefits Members of Congress enjoy, my bill would improve preventive care and treatment of disease. It would provide modern insurance benefits, such as preventive and maintenance care for chronic conditions. And as in all private plans, a modern prescription drug benefit is an inherent part of this policy.

The health care plan for federal employees has demonstrated success in rural areas. 98 percent of rural counties offer at least three plans, and 87 percent offer six or more choices. My bill would create insurance parity through Medicare, by offering identical insurance options to beneficiaries in urban and rural areas on a state-by-state basis.

Finally, my bill would recognize the difference between poor and middle class seniors, and those in the highest income brackets, since premiums would be based on level of income. My proposal would pay the entire pre-

mium for senior citizens earning up to \$17,952 for singles and \$24,288 for couples (200 percent of the poverty level). Above that level, the premium paid would decrease by ten percent for each additional 100 percent over the poverty level. For senior citizens earning over \$71,809 for singles and over \$101,153 for couples (800 percent of the poverty level), the program would pay 30 percent of their premiums.

Income sensitive premiums, competitive plans, better cost control and preventative care will ensure that Medicare's price tag is kept low. In this way, we can assure Medicare will evolve with the times and be solvent for the future.

Government cannot prevent Americans from growing older. But we can help senior citizens enjoy higher quality of life, while providing the retirees of tomorrow with a sound Medicare program that will still exist for them, too.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY HONORS JULIE T. WU OF THE U.S. PHYSICS OLYMPIAD TEAM

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Julie T. Wu of Manalapan High School in Englishtown, New Jersey. Ms. Wu was in Washington, recently as one of 24 members of the U.S. Physics Olympiad Team vying for a chance to represent the United States at the International Physics Olympiad on July 12th in Taipei, Taiwan.

The U.S. Physics Olympiad program has a long history of success. It is designed to encourage excellence in physics education and to reward outstanding physics students. It provides an opportunity for top students to take part in an outstanding scientific and cultural experience that would not normally be available through the tradition high school curriculum.

The U.S. Physics Team members were selected from a pool of more than 1400 students who were nominated by their high school physics teachers to take the Olympiad physics exams. These students represent the "best and the brightest" physics talent in our Nation. Julie is a perfect example of the type of talented and motivated students that take part in the program.

Julie's accomplishments as a young scholar are impressive. She has received the Siemens' Award for her performance on the Advanced Placement exams in math and science. Julie is also a National Merit Scholar, and has placed 1st in the New Jersey Science League for biology and physics, 2nd in Chemistry Nomenclature in the New Jersey Chemistry Olympics, 3rd for the US National Chemistry Olympiad qualifying exam, and 1st for biology and 3rd in chemistry in the National Science Olympiad.

In addition to her impressive list of academic achievements, Julie has excelled outside the classroom as well. She is co-captain of the varsity tennis team, treasurer of her school's chapter of Junior Statesmen of America, and a section editor of her school's yearbook.

We are honored to have Julie representing the 12th district of New Jersey at this prestigious competition.